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GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS

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B. Anthony Stewart

HER NATIVE ISLAND WAS STILL A GERMAN "POCKET" WHILE BERLIN BATTLED

This girl of modern Crete is wearing jewelry like that her grandmothers wore centuries ago on this ancient island—part of Greece—which the Germans of today converted into one of the hold-out pockets characterizing World War II (Bulletin No. 2).

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Status as Capital and Commercial Center Came Late to Berlin

THE rise and ruin of Berlin as Germany's capital and a world metropolis have taken place within the last three-quarters of a century. Although the city dates from medieval times, and was the capital in turn of Brandenburg and Prussia, it did not join the front ranks of international cities as the government seat of the newly formed German Empire until 1871.

Between 1870 and 1939 Berlin's population rose from less than 900,000 to nearly four and a half million, making it the largest city on the European continent. It had also become Germany's leading industrial and commercial center, the hub of transport lines by air, road, superhighway, rail, river, and canal.

Political Fortune and Location Caused Berlin's Growth

Berlin's early as well as modern development was the result of a mixture of historical factors and its location on convenient traffic routes across the North German Plain. The city grew out of two fishing villages mentioned as early as the 13th century on an island and near-by bank of the Spree River, 100 miles from the Baltic Sea. Lying between the great Elbe and Oder rivers, west and east, and between the southern German highlands and sea outlets on the north, Berlin became an easily reached, natural crossroads on paths of trade and conquest.

In pioneering days, it was an outpost of the militant religious order of the Teutonic Knights in their campaigns to subjugate and convert the Slavs in this part of Europe. Later, as the capital of Brandenburg, Berlin was the nucleus of the expanding power of the Hohenzollern family, destined to create and rule the militaristic state of Prussia, and eventually to dominate all Germany.

From the time of its origin, Berlin made spectacular leaps in growth and development, interrupted by occasional periods of letdown. In the century following 1688, the city's inhabitants increased from 20,000 to nearly 150,000; in the decade between 1870 and 1880, from about 826,000 to 1,122,000. Before the First World War, Greater Berlin was approaching a population of 4,000,000, a figure that dropped soon after the war to 2,000,000, but bounced back to more than four million before the beginning of the present war.

Reports of the early 1920's indicated that perhaps 200,000 of the people then living in Berlin were Russian refugees from the Bolshevik Revolution. Visitors also mentioned that the Berliners seemed poorly dressed and ill-nourished, although actual war destruction had not reached the city in 1914-18.

Bombing Made City a Shambles Before Its Capture

Modern Berlin had an area of 341 square miles sprawled over a flat open plain, unsheltered from summer heat or bitter winter winds. The city site is 34 miles long from west to east. Before the aerial punishment of the present war, it was the nation's second inland port, linked with the rest of the country by a complex network of waterways. A dozen or more railways ran through Berlin. It also had electrical metropolitan lines.

In addition to the transport facilities which have played an important role in giving Berlin the uncomfortable lead among Europe's bomb targets, this city operated nearly 200 of the leading factories of Germany, employing one-tenth of the nation's industrial workers. Its manufacturing activities were many and varied, including huge plants turning out such war-vital products as electrical

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B. Anthony Stewart

A MARTELLO TOWER ON GUERNSEY, RAISED FOR DEFENSE AGAINST NAPOLEON, WITNESSED MODERN INVASION FROM THE CONTINENT

Back of the pebbly beach at Fermain Bay on the Channel Island of Guernsey, rises a tower built for an invasion that never came, useless against an actual invasion more than a century later. This stone citadel, erected by the British as a defense against Napoleon, had no effect on Germans who poured into Britain's Norman islands in 1940 and entrenched themselves in this rocky pocket between France and England. Such towers were incorrectly called "Martello" after one on Cape Mortella, Corsica, which held out against British forces in 1794. Its stubborn resistance led the British to believe there must be exceptional military merit in its design. When Napoleon's shadow loomed across the Channel they built similar towers along their south and east coasts and on nearly every possible landing place in the Channel Islands. Over the cliffs (right) a path leads to Guernsey's metropolis, the ancient town of St. Peter Port (Bulletin No. 2).

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Fighting in Isolated Pockets Characterizes World War II

PAST wars have been occasionally accented by history-making pockets of resistance which held out after the main battle lines moved on. World War II, however, has been marked from its beginnings in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific by bitter fighting in many and long-lasting pockets.

In the early stages, when Axis blitz tactics were succeeding, Allied forces fought repeatedly in pockets against overwhelming odds—at Dunkerque in June, 1940; at Odessa for two months ending October, 1941; at Sevastopol from October, 1941, to July, 1942; and on Bataan and Corregidor for four months ending May 6, 1942.

Bastogne and Ruhr Pockets Are of Recent Memory

After the turn of the tide put Germany and Japan on the defensive, fanatical Nazis and Japs were the holed-in tenants in most of the numerous pockets left behind the moving fronts. Accenting this characteristic of World War II, German resistance in the last stages of the war consisted entirely of pockets.

In Allied-held western Germany, large Nazi pockets in the Harz Mountains, south of Magdeburg, and in the Ruhr were squeezed to the disappearing point recently. Canadians have driven north to the IJssel Meer (Zuider Zee) and the Ems estuary, trapping Germans in a diminishing pocket in the Netherlands.

In December, the Germans bulged westward into Luxembourg and Belgium, and Americans were pocketed at the town of Bastogne. With the new year, the Bastogne pocket was relieved and the Germans themselves were cut into pockets before they could completely withdraw from the area of their bulge.

Among the most stubborn of Nazi-tenanted pockets are four on the French Atlantic coast, in which 100,000 Germans continued to keep useful ports from the Allies nearly a full year after D-day. One of these is at the same Dunkerque evacuated by Britons in 1940, forty miles east of England's port of Dover. One is at Lorient, another at St. Nazaire, both French submarine-base ports, where 60,000 trapped Germans have been receiving mail and supplies by their submarines, according to reports.

Mediterranean Area Had Many "Coffin Corners"

The fourth French coast pocket until mid-April spread for miles along the coast on both sides of the mouth of the Gironde River. It completely bottled up the port of Bordeaux, fourth-largest city of prewar France. Well-equipped French patriots have now greatly reduced it.

Cherbourg and St. Malo, on the French side of the English Channel, made news soon after D-day because of the prolonged resistance of their die-hard German garrisons. On the ship route between these two ports are Britain's Channel Islands—Jersey, Guernsey (illustration, inside cover), Alderney, and Sark—whose 70,000 British subjects remain under military rule of Nazis who invaded in 1940.

On the eastern European front the Germans have been repeatedly pocketed since a Russian offensive late in 1942 trapped 22 divisions in front of Stalingrad, breaking the long siege of that city. Encircling movements stranded large German forces in the Baltic states and East Prussia, left garrisons that held out for weeks at Poznań (Posen) and Breslau, among other cities.

The Tunis-Bizerte top of Tunisia in North Africa, the Palermo and Messina

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equipment, airplane engines, cables, armaments, machine tools, and chemicals. Situated in the suburbs ringing Berlin proper, some of these factories were surrounded by workers' homes and other buildings that constituted towns within the city.

The swift rise of Berlin as an ambitious commercial center, together with the extensive building programs carried on periodically from the time of Frederick the Great, gave a predominating modern flavor to the German capital, in which few landmarks were left of its medieval past. Its wide paved streets, intricate system of transport, massive government buildings, modernistic airport (illustration, below), hotels, office buildings, department stores, and apartment houses lent an air of power and solidity to the city now reported to be a bombed-out shambles by its Soviet captors.

Note: Berlin is shown on the National Geographic Society's Map of Germany and Its Approaches. A price list of maps may be obtained from the Society's headquarters, Washington 6, D. C.

See also, in the GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, December 13, 1943, "Industrial Bull's-Eyes Hit in Bombed Berlin."

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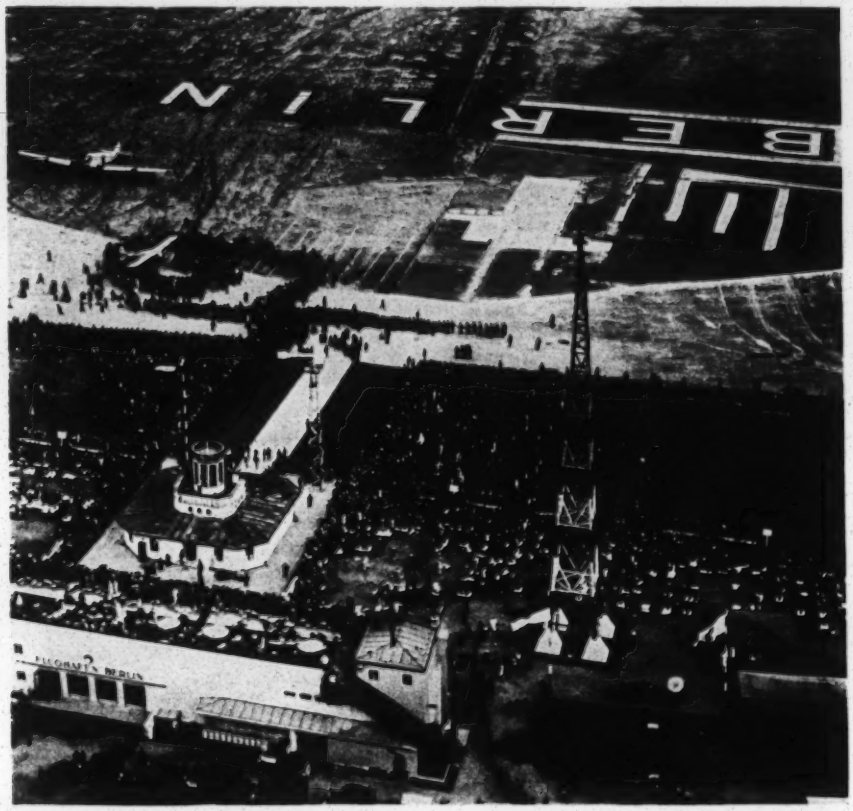

Pacific and Atlantic

BERLIN'S TEMPELHOF AIRDROME ATTRACTED SOVIET TANKS

One of the first objectives of tank-riding Soviet infantry mentioned in dispatches from the Battle of Berlin was this giant airfield just south of the center of Germany's sprawling capital. Reported capture of planes with warmed-up motors may have prevented a last-minute escape of Nazi officials.

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tips of Sicily, Corsica's northern peninsula, and the hill-encircled French harbor of Toulon became successive "coffin corners" for Axis forces pressed by Allied power moving on Fortress Europe from the south.

In eastern Asia, China's coastal cities have for years been Jap-held pockets, denying that republic supplies from the sea. Inland behind the ports of Foochow (illustration, end of Index), Amoy, and Swatow, a large area became a pocket of China cut off from the rest of the country when the Japs recently succeeded in capturing the final segment (near Hengyang) of the Hankow-to-Canton railroad.

Island-hopping northwestward from the Solomons since 1942 and westward from the Gilberts since late 1943, Americans have pushed the Pacific front toward Japan's home islands. They have left island pockets of the enemy far behind to "wither on the vine" or to be cleaned up later—on Bougainville, New Britain, along New Guinea's long coast, at Truk, and many other spots. Capture of the Philippines has virtually made the entire East Indies and Malaya area a nervously held Jap pocket.

An amazing footnote to pocket warfare is the fact that, at the time of Soviet entry into Berlin, when Germany was all but cut in two and the last glimmering hope of winning the war was gone, German forces still controlled all or parts of 12 countries, not counting the Reich itself. These still subjugated lands were: all of Denmark (illustration, below); Austria, all but the eastern edge; Czechoslovakia, nearly all of Bohemia and Moravia; Poland, a narrow slice at entrance to the Moravian Gate; Italy, northern third; France, a few coastal pockets; England, the Channel Islands; the Netherlands, area including largest cities; Norway, all but the far north; Latvia, a pocket on the Baltic; Yugoslavia, northwest corner; and Greece, west end of Crete (illustration, cover).

Bulletin No. 2, May 14, 1945.

Willis Lindquist

IN COPENHAGEN, LAW-ABIDING CYCLISTS WAIT FOR THE GREEN LIGHT

In Denmark's capital city (Kobenhavn to the Danes) there were 400,000 bicycles before the war—a number necessitating traffic rules nearly as strict as for the automobiles of an American city. When the Soviets entered Berlin, Denmark was the only country entirely under German forces.

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W. Robert Moore

MILITARILY, FOOCHOW (MINHOW) IS A POCKET WITHIN A POCKET

This port near the mouth of the Min River was China's great tea exporting center of the last century. Today, Jap garrisons hold pockets of land in and around all south China ports. The immediate interior of south China is itself a large pocket of Chinese resistance cut off from Chungking by the Japs along the Hankow-Canton rail route.